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## He Found A Watch

And Received the Reward He Wished For

By ESTHER VANDEVEER

Simpson was walking on the street one afternoon in a portion of the city devoted to residences. The sidewalks were broad and laid between grass plots. In the grass on one side he saw something sparkling. Going to it he took up a gold hunting watch. The first thing that Simpson did was to press the spring to open the lid over the face. He caught his breath. Inside the lid was a photograph of the face of a young girl and so pretty that Simpson would have given his head for one kiss of the original. The watch was of good size and evidently belonged to a man. A pang shot through the liver as it occurred to him that the girl was the betrothed of the owner of the watch.

On the outside of the case, in a smooth space within the chasing, were the initials "H. F. L." "That's the guy that owns the watch and the girl, too, I suppose," muttered Simpson to himself. "I can find out who he is through the directory or possibly the telephone book. I don't mind returning the watch, but I'd like to keep the picture."

He went to the nearest drug store, where he took down the telephone book, turned to "L." and began to run his eyes down the names, keeping them open for the three letters on the watch. It was a long hunt, for there were more than a thousand surnames beginning with "L." and in this case the second letter in the surname was at the lower end of the alphabet. It was "o." The name with the letters "H. F. L." before it was Loring. Henry F. Loring corresponded with the letters on the watch, and it was probable that this Loring was the owner. His residence was on an eminently respectable street, and very likely he was one of the upper ten thousand.

Simpson was in no hurry to return the watch because the picture went with it, and the oftener he looked at it the more he was infatuated with it. But conscience, combined with a desire to find the original, compelled him to look for an advertisement of the lost property, and at last one met his eye. A reward was offered if the watch was delivered at the office of the newspaper containing the ad.

Simpson was not to be put off in this way. He walked past Mr. Loring's residence and asked a cop on the beat who lived there and what persons constituted the family. He was pleased to learn that Mr. Loring was its head. This was all he elicited or needed. Mr. Loring was doubtless the father of the girl whose picture had enthralled Simpson instead of being her lover.

What luck! Simpson went home, took down his telephone book and learned the Loring number. Then he called for it.

"Is Miss Loring at home?" he asked. "Hold the wire."

In a few moments a feminine voice asked what was wanted. "I have found a watch with the initials 'H. F. L.' on the case. Has any one of your family lost a watch?" "Isn't that lovely! Mamma, papa's watch has been found!" Then again in the transmitter, "There's a reward offered."

"Never mind that. I wish first to establish the fact that the property belongs to your family. Can you identify it in any way?"

"Yes; there is a photograph inside the case."

"Of a very lovely girl?"

"Oh, no, not that; only a girl!"

"Then it can't be the watch you suppose it to be. The photograph is surely that of an angel. I suppose I must look further for the owner."

There was no reply to this. So Simpson began again:

"I might take the watch to your house, and if the photograph appears to be a likeness of one of your family that would prove property."

Quite likely by this time the girl had got on to Simpson's facetious manner of returning the watch and proposed to play him at his own game.

"If the photograph is that of an angel there is no use of bringing it here. There's no angel in this house."

Simpson was a gentleman and remembered that such a dialogue forced unnecessarily on a young lady by a stranger—indeed, one she could not even see—was impertinent. He must be cautious or he would get himself shut off.

"Are your father's initials 'H. F. L.'?" he asked.

"They are."

"Then the watch must belong to him. It is not for me to suggest the manner of its return. I am George Simpson, Athenaeum club. Unless I hear from some one of your family soon I shall send it by messenger to your house."

"I'll tell papa. Thank you very much."

"Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

Simpson flattered himself that he had made a very good bid for an introduction. He could scarcely be accused of transcending the proper limits. He was not supposed to know that the person at the phone was the original of the photograph. He had got in a fine compliment without offense. He had given his address and could only await the issue.

The next morning he received a note that Mr. Loring would call upon him that evening at his club. When the gentleman called Simpson handed him the watch. Of course the owner made no mention of a reward. He acknowledged the obligation and asked if there were not some way of making a return.

"There is only one way," said Simpson, "of doing that, but it would not be permissible for me to mention it, at least not now."

"Were the watch an ordinary one," replied the other, "I should consider that thanks expressed for its return would be sufficient. But it is a very valuable one. I have had it tested in an astronomical observatory and those in charge pronounced it equal for accurate timekeeping to their best chronometers. But this is unimportant beside the fact that it was given me by my late wife. I trust that you will think over the matter and find some method of enabling me to show my appreciation for its return."

"How did it come into the position in which I found it?"

"I cannot tell you. The watch was stolen some time ago. Possibly the one having it, fearing arrest, purposely dropped it that he should not be incriminated by its being found on his person."

"I appreciate your feeling in the matter, Mr. Loring. I will endeavor to think up some way by which you may get your desire."

When Mr. Loring went home that evening there was much eagerness to hear all about the recovery of his treasured keepsake. Had Simpson opened the other side of the case he would have seen a photograph of an elderly lady, the donor of the watch, and would have noticed a resemblance between it and the face on the other side. What especially pleased those interested was that this photograph was returned unblemished, for it was the only one of its kind in existence.

"What kind of a looking man was he, papa?" asked Miss Loring.

"A very gentlemanly appearing young fellow."

"Did you offer to pay him the reward?"

"Of course not. To offer a gentleman a reward for the return of lost property would have been an insult. I explained to him why I prized the watch and asked him to name some way that would be agreeable to him whereby I might show my appreciation of his return of the property."

"What did he say to that?"

"He said that there was only one way of doing it, but it would not be permissible for him to mention it, at least not at present."

Miss Loring turned away to hide a faint blush. Her father continued:

"I begged him to think over the matter and endeavored to find some method of my acknowledging the obligation."

"Did he say he would?"

"Yes."

"I think, papa, that you can scarcely expect that of him, or at least that he should name any favor acceptable to him. It seems to me that it is our part to find a way to favor him."

"Well, Puss, what do you suggest?" "Why, since he is a gentleman quite likely he knows some one that we know. In that way you might form his acquaintance in a more conventional way than by his returning the watch, and then, you know, it would be in order for you to invite him to dinner."

"I can invite him to dinner without hunting up a mutual friend. It strikes me that returning a man a valued keepsake in the shape of a \$500 watch is more of a voucher than a conventional introduction."

There was no response to this, at least none that was visible to the father, for Miss Loring's face was turned away. Nevertheless her eye lighted with satisfaction.

"An invitation to dinner," she continued, "is not in itself an expression of your appreciation of what the gentleman has done, but it will give you an opportunity to discover how to convey a favor."

"I see," said the father, and, seating himself before a desk, he wrote the invitation.

Now, if the young lady had said, "It will give me an opportunity to discover how to convey a favor," she would have spoken the truth. And if she had said, "He wants the picture you carry in the lid of your watch; his coming to dinner will enable me to find a way of giving him a duplicate," she would have told the whole truth.

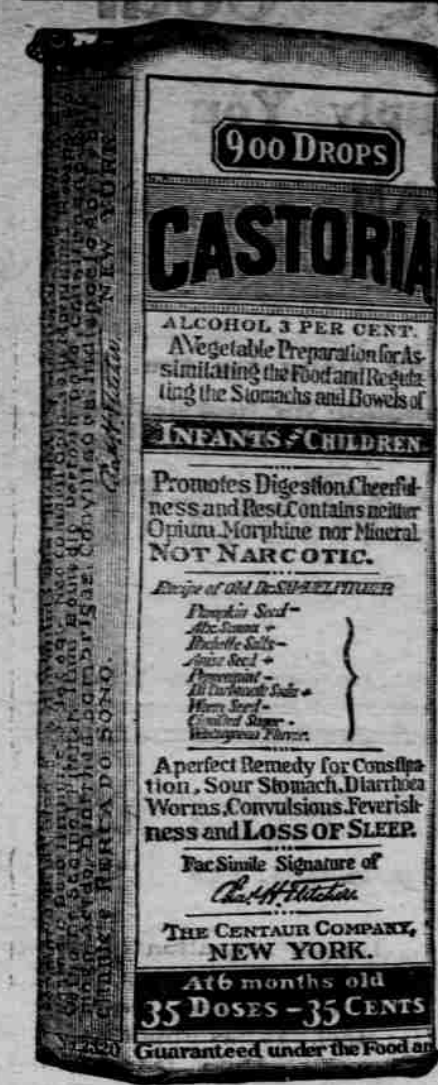
When Simpson opened the invitation he looked as if he had been plunged in a basin of joy.

"You bet," he said to himself, "that George Simpson, Esq., has managed this affair just about right! George you have good reason to be proud of yourself."

Oh, the conceit of man! Simpson had managed the affair well enough so far as he was in a position to manage it, but had not his action been supplemented by the all important suggestion of Miss Loring he might have whistled to the wind for the desired acquaintance.

The dinner came off, and after it was over naturally enough Simpson and Miss Loring were left together, while the father read the evening paper in his smoking room. And George found no difficulty whatever in telling what kind of a reward for the return of the watch would be acceptable to him. After a good deal of backing and filling on the part of the young lady he went away with a duplicate of the picture in the case of her father's watch.

From this point the narrative is like all other love stories. Simpson now carries the photograph of his wife in one side of his watch and one of his daughter in the other. They look like twins.



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